

# Alison Weir (activist)

For the British author, see [Alison Weir](#).

**Alison Weir** is an American activist and writer who focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She is the founder and executive director of the non-profit organization [If Americans Knew](#) (IAK) and president of the [Council for the National Interest](#) (CNI). She is known for critical views toward Israel.<sup>[1]</sup>

Weir is author of *Against Our Better Judgment: The Hidden History of How the U.S. Was Used to Create Israel*, and she and [If Americans Knew](#) are known for critiquing media coverage of Israel. She has received both criticism and praise for her activism.

## 1 Activism

Weir traces her interest in the Israeli-Palestinian issue back to the autumn of 2000, when the second intifada began. At the time she was “the editor of a small weekly newspaper in [Sausalito, California](#),” and noticed that news reports on the conflict “were highly Israeli-centric.” Wanting access to “full information,” she “began to look for additional reports on the Internet.” After months of study, she decided that “this was perhaps the most covered-up story I had ever seen” and quit her job in order to visit the [West Bank](#) and [Gaza](#), where she wrote about her encounters with Palestinian suffering and with the “incredible arrogance, cruelty, selfishness” of Israelis. After returning to the U.S., she founded [If Americans Knew](#).<sup>[2]</sup> Weir’s official biography says her activism draws on her history of involvement in the [American Civil Rights Movement](#), her work in the [Peace Corps](#), and her childhood in a military family.<sup>[3]</sup>

Weir’s writings include exhortations to action. In an article titled, “Choosing to Act: Anti-Semitism is Wrong” she writes: “Every generation has a chance to act courageously – to oppose the kind of injustice and unthinkable brutality that is going on in the Middle East right now. Or to avert our eyes, and remain silent”.<sup>[4]</sup>

Weir has called Israel a “violently imposed, ethnically based nation-state,”<sup>[5]</sup> and has written that “The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is central to grave events in the world—and in our nation—today.”<sup>[6]</sup>

Ambassador [Andrew Killgore](#) wrote: “Alison Weir must be highly commended for throwing such a brilliantly hard light on the relationship between the United States and Israel.”<sup>[7]</sup> The [Anti-Defamation League](#) has called Weir

“a prominent voice in the anti-Israel movement.”<sup>[8]</sup>

In June 2015, [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) (JVP) stated that they chose not to work with Weir, on the grounds that “she has consistently chosen to stay silent when given the opportunity to challenge bigotry, which we find repugnant. There is a fundamental difference between engaging with oppressive beliefs in order to challenge them, and tacitly or directly endorsing those beliefs without challenge.” JVP did not accuse Weir of holding anti-Jewish beliefs, but accused her of granting interviews to people it believed held anti-Jewish beliefs and decried some of the websites that have reposted her writings.<sup>[9][10]</sup> Weir responded in detail to the accusations,<sup>[11]</sup> which provoked widespread debate among activists.<sup>[12][13]</sup> In writing about anti-Semitism, Weir has argued that “in reality, equating the wrongdoing of Israel with Jewishness is the deepest and most insidious form of anti-Semitism of all.”<sup>[4]</sup>

More than 2,000 activists signed an open letter supporting Weir, including former [United Nations](#) Special Rapporteur on the [Palestinian Territories](#) and Professor of International Law Emeritus at Princeton University [Richard Falk](#); founding member of [Birzeit University](#)’s board of Trustees [Samia Khoury](#); activist and Holocaust survivor [Hedy Epstein](#); Palestine Rapprochement Center Director/ISM co-founder [George Rishimawi](#); peace activists [Ann Wright](#), [Arun Gandhi](#), [Ray McGovern](#), and [Cindy Sheehan](#); [American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee](#) founder and former Senator [James Abourezk](#); and many members of JVP itself. The letter stated that the undersigned were “dismayed by the recent unfounded attacks on one of the top organizations working on this issue, [If Americans Knew](#), and its dedicated leader, Alison Weir,” and believed that the accusations against Weir were “scurrilous and without foundation.”<sup>[14][15]</sup>

## 2 If Americans Knew

Main article: [If Americans Knew](#)

Weir founded [If Americans Knew](#) (IAK) after her visit to the [West Bank](#) and [Gaza Strip](#) during the [Second Intifada](#) in 2001.<sup>[16]</sup> Weir describes IAK as “an organization that provides information on topics of importance that are substantially misreported or unreported in the US media” with a primary focus on analyzing media coverage of Israel-Palestine.<sup>[2]</sup>

IAK, a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in California, describes its mission as follows: “The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the world’s major sources of instability. Americans are directly connected to this conflict, and increasingly imperiled by its devastation. It is the goal of If Americans Knew to provide full and accurate information on this critical issue, and on our power – and duty – to bring a resolution.”<sup>[17]</sup>

On December 16, 2012, IAK placed an advertisement in the *New York Times* featuring four maps which purport to show the Palestinians’ progressive loss of land to Israel between 1946 and 2010.<sup>[18]</sup>

### 3 Council for the National Interest

Main article: [Council for the National Interest](#)

In June 2010, Weir was named to succeed Eugene Bird, the longtime leader of the Council for the National Interest (CNI).<sup>[8]</sup>

CNI describes itself as seeking to “encourage and promote a U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East that is consistent with American values, protects our national interests, and contributes to a just solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is CNI’s goal to restore a political environment in America in which voters and their elected officials are free from the undue influence and pressure of foreign countries and their partisans.”<sup>[19]</sup>

### 4 Honors and awards

In 2004, she became the first woman to receive an honorary membership in the [Phi Alpha Literary Society](#) and was described as a “[c]ourageous journalist-lecturer on behalf of human rights.”<sup>[3]</sup> Other honorary members have included President Jimmy Carter and journalist Helen Thomas.<sup>[20][21]</sup>

Weir has also won awards from the [American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee \(ADC\)](#) and the [Council on American–Islamic Relations \(CAIR\)](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

### 5 Book

Weir is the author of “Against Our Better Judgment: The Hidden History of How the U.S. Was Used to Create Israel,” published in February 2014.<sup>[22][23]</sup> Senator James Abourezk called the book “a must for all Americans” in a review for the [Washington Report on Middle East Affairs](#)<sup>[24]</sup> and Congressman Paul Findley writes that “Alison Weir is a gifted writer who here illuminates neglected history.”<sup>[23]</sup>

## 6 References

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- Official website

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